

MINUTES

TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

9 September 2013

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 3:00 PM on Monday, 9 September 2013. Those members in attendance were Mr. Ward Bucher, Chairperson; Mr. Ron Mitchell, Mrs. Marsha Kacher, Dr. Dorothy C. Fenwick and Mr. Jacob Laureska. Mr. Robert Amdur and Ms. Alice Marie Gravely were absent. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich and Mrs. Carole Sellman.

II. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW MINUTES OF 5 AUGUST 2013 MEETING – The minutes of the last meeting were read. There was a clarification of the word “conductive” for the T1-11 which was agreed to be correct. Mr. Ron Mitchell moved to approve the minutes as written, and the motion was seconded and unanimously carried.
- B. STATUS FOR HDO APPLICATION FOR OLD BLOOMFIELD (T-175) – Mr. Ward Bucher stated this topic can be taken off the agenda for now. Mr. Bartlett is considering a change to the windows or constructing a guest house, which would be a great addition. However, at this time he is not ready to move forward.
- C. RELOCATION OF JOHN W. GREEN STORE (T-769) – Mr. Ward Bucher spoke to Dale Green who will contact Mr. DeShields regarding assistance. When Mr. Bucher spoke with Elizabeth Beckley of Preservation Maryland, who stated that because it is on private property, there can be no funding from her organization. Mr. Bucher said it was similar to the problem with churches. Mr. Ron Mitchell stated that they had been able to get \$100,000.00 from the State of Maryland for Asbury Church in a grant. Mr. Bucher asked what the grant was for, and if it was for the historic Black churches. Mr. Mitchell replied that they received the grant from Historic Easton to the churches.

Mr. Martin Sokolich spoke with Beth Hanson, Curator of Talbot County Historic Society, who is putting together an exhibit for this fall for the Village of Cordova and let her know there is a trove of artifacts for Bellevue if she wanted to move on that for the following year. Mr. Sokolich believes Mr. DeShield’s granddaughter might have done an internship with the Historical Society and might be of some assistance with preserving the artifacts until they can be exhibited.

- D. WILLARD WORKMAN’S REQUEST FOR TCHPC SUPPORT – Mr. Ward Bucher distributed a copy of the response he drafted which stated the Commission could not help him. We can only review things that come before the Commission. Mr. Bucher had previously responded to him via email and wanted to respond to his letter on Commission letterhead. Mr. Sokolich stated he had checked on his appeal status, and Mr. Workman wants to change a County application of a Critical Areas law. The procedure would be to propose to the County Council to have an informational meeting to request a certain property be allowed to be re-designated to a different Critical Area

district. If the Council is favorable to this request, Mr. Workman can draft the legislation. The Commission would be supporting a trial balloon at this point. Mr. Bucher was hesitant to support Mr. Workman under the circumstances, since it was not to support preservation of a historic building, but the use of a new building for an economic benefit.

MOTION: Mr. Ron Mitchell moved that an outline letter be sent; Marsha Kacher seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - Mr. Ward Bucher expressed his surprise that there is a committee on the comprehensive plan dealing with historic preservation and the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was not involved. Mr. Martin Sokolich explained it has been a long and drawn-out process to review the comprehensive plan. State law asks for a review of the plan every six years. Chapter committees were formed and reviewed chapter by chapter to evaluate what was already in the plan; not to rewrite it. Planning and Zoning is working on updating the comprehensive plan. Mr. Bucher asked who was responsible for this process. Mr. Sokolich stated he is mainly responsible for running the process. On the committee were Marsha Kacher, Pete Leshner, Debra Davis former Executive Director of Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. (now with Dorchester County), Bob Moses (Tilghman Watermen's Museum). Mr. Sokolich stated he is still working on the more complicated chapters. He presented the proposed historic text to the Committee. Mr. Sokolich stated that the goal is to get all the chapters together in a draft document and circulate it to all of the committee groups and the public for comments. If anyone thinks anything needs to be changed, Mr. Sokolich suggested letting him know, with the understanding the plan is a general direction document.

Mr. Ward Bucher asked for clarification that there is no goal to have designation of historic districts decoupled from requiring a request for an HDO from the property owner. Mr. Sokolich stated that is true. Mr. Bucher said other Counties in Maryland do not require that it be requested by the property owner, and as such, TCHPC is in a very unusual situation that makes it very difficult to do historic preservation outside of the designated districts.

Mr. Bucher explained that one could take a county like Howard County, which even though it had a densely populated area like Columbia, it also had an abundance of open areas. In that county, you cannot develop anything if your property is eligible for the National Register; hence the preservation aspect is covered. He felt that ought to be a goal for Talbot County as well. Mr. Sokolich agreed with that proposition, but cautioned that if the ordinance currently in place is appealed, all the current historic districts will have the opportunity of opting out.

Mr. Sokolich stated we have historic preservation with a zoning overlay because the County Council decided that spot overlays would be the way to go for this vast land area. With some places like Wye House (T-54) and Rich Neck Manor (T-211), the HDO covers quite a bit of property; yet with others it covers just around the foundation of the

house. Mr. Bucher said he was also concerned about the protection of historic properties because there is nothing to prevent the demolition or alteration of those properties that are currently not under an HDO. The Maryland Historic Trust determines when something is eligible. The problem is getting appropriate legislation adopted. He asked, "What is the next step?"

Mr. Sokolich asked what would be the best way to get amended language, and if the Commissioners want to draft language among themselves and get it back to him.

Mr. Ward Bucher stated they had been fighting with the Town of Easton over the Gardner House, which is the Buffalo Soldier's house. They want to demolish it. The Mayor agreed to give it a six month moratorium. Mr. Bucher added that Buffalo Soldier papers were found there, as well as a button from a Union uniform.

Mr. Sokolich explained the comprehensive plan process for adopting the plan is to get all the chapters together, have a public meeting; then, the Planning Commission will review and recommend changes and amendments with a public hearing for comments. They will then make recommendations to the County Council for their changes, amendments and public hearing comments. The County Council will then vote to adopt them or not.

MOTION: Mr. Ron Mitchell moved to modify the proposed Historic Preservation language for the Comprehensive Plan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Marsha Kacher and was unanimously carried.

- B. UPDATE - PROPOSED ROOF FOR COURTHOUSE (T-65) - Mr. Martin Sokolich said he has heard nothing. There is south wing courthouse work that needs to be addressed. A bid has been sought for remedial work to address water intrusion in the old Music Hall.

Mr. Sokolich stated that the general issue to consider is that it has been a while since the Historic Commission has met with the County Administration for a discussion. Other departments come in on a quarterly basis, so it might be time to ask to get on the County Council agenda for a work session to see where TCHPC can be of assistance to the County. The County has a new Parks and Recreation Director, Preston Peper, who is a native of the Western Shore. Mr. Sokolich speculated that he might not be aware of the assets he has. Mr. Ward Bucher suggested that it might also be a good idea to have an individual session with Mr. Peper. Mr. Ron Mitchell felt it might be advantageous to have an informal session to set up an agenda for both the County Council and Department of Parks and Recreation.

- C. MT. MISERY (T-207) SITE VISIT AND NEXT SCHEDULED SITE VISIT – Mr. Ward Bucher stated a site visit was completed and a report was obtained. Mr. Sokolich stated he needs to check with Florence to see if the final report has gone out.
- D. DOVER BRIDGE PLANS SECTION 106 FINDINGS - Dover Bridge is a Section 106 project. The State is going to replace the bridge, which requires realigning Dover Road. It is planned to leave the old bridge as an historic monument/attraction. In the process, they did some archeology, and on one of the farms found what may have been the remains of an old tavern going back to the days of the village of Dover in the early

1700s. Toward Caroline County on the west (south) side of the road is the archaeological dig. More archaeology is planned. Everything found will be taken to a lab for analysis and for permanent curation. If the property owner wants these artifacts he can have them; otherwise, they will go to the State to be put in a museum. Two other sites were tested and there were no findings. Mr. Martin Sokolich said he has spoken with this landowner in the past about putting his land in farmland preservation. Everything has been undisturbed because it was below plow depth, a foot or deeper. Everything found was pretty much fragments and nothing there was critical to leave in place. They found some post holes or foundations. The only areas being excavated are the areas that will be used for the road project. Mr. Ron Mitchell questioned if the farmer could be requested to donate the artifacts to the Talbot County Historical Society. Mr. Sokolich said we could request to have that done but he was not sure what the jurisdictional requirements would be.

Mr. Ward Bucher said that Section 106, of the National Historic Preservation Act states if you spend federal funds you are required to determine whether there will be historic adverse effect, and that appropriate mitigation is planned for adverse effect if it will occur. The question is whether or not TCHPC agree with that. Mr. Bucher stated that the site is eligible to be on the National Register of Historic places, and there is adverse effect. Approval must be conditioned upon the following action: to try to retain the artifacts locally.

It was discussed that in the future, when items like this arrive, they would be emailed to the TCHPC Commissioners as promptly as possible to give them time to prepare their comments.

Ms. Kacher stated that Mr. Sokolich should email the Maryland Historic Commission. There will be three main points to the email:

1. Would like to see the research report;
 2. Would like a provision added that Talbot County Historic Society would be able to retain the artifacts; and
 3. Is there a "What If" Scenario?
- E. WYE HOUSE (T-54) – ARTIFACT EXHIBIT AT ACADEMY OF ARTS – The Commissioners were urged to go see the Exhibit which will contain interesting artifacts.
- F. HILL LECTURE SCHEDULED FOR 10 OCTOBER 2013 – Dale Green will be giving a lecture in Cambridge.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be on Monday, 7 October 2013, at 3:00 pm in Conference Room One of the Talbot County Office Building at 215 Bay Street in Easton.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:30 pm.

Edited by FEB 9/23/2013